

Appendix C

Public Process

Introduction

Monroe committed to full and comprehensive citizen involvement in this comprehensive plan process, recognizing that public engagement is key to the creation, adoption and implementation of a plan such as this. In addition, this planning process sought to integrate a variety of special purpose plans into comprehensive plan policy, coordinating work on transportation, utility, parks and economic development planning as part of the overall effort.

Consultants on the plan update team worked directly with the City's staff and with the citizen advisory committee for the comprehensive plan process, comprised of the City of Monroe Planning Commission and invited community members. All were instrumental in establishing the direction of the plan, developing alternative scenarios and refining goals and directives.

Following City and consultant discussions on process and expectations, the comprehensive plan process included a set of interviews with community leaders, agency staff and other residents; public meetings, workshops and committee presentations; a week-long "storefront studio;" on-line engagement; event flyers and advertisements; print media and other means of communicating with the citizens of Monroe.

Process Activities

Detailed descriptions of the various meetings and engagement activities are provided below:



Figure C.01 – The first priority of the City was to involve the community every step of the way, ensuring this plan update could benefit from public consideration, conversation and debate. (Image source: Monroe Historical Society & Museum)

Stakeholder Interviews

On October 15, 16 and 17, several Monroe residents, business owners and agency staffers met with the comprehensive plan consultant team to raise and discuss issues of importance to them. The three days of interviews produced an initial list of topics the comprehensive plan update and the parks and rec and transportation system plans will need to address. Other topics and issues will certainly arise during the process, but this represents a starting point. The views expressed during the interviews may reflect those held by many in the community and will help shape early community events. As the community discussion broadens, additional thoughts, suggestions and observations brought forward will also be incorporated into the conversation, ensuring the emerging plan reflects as diverse and representative a view of the public's needs and desires as possible.

Table C.01 – Interview schedule - 2013

Date	Interviewees	
October 15	Bill Davisson	Monroe correctional complex
	Regan Landis	
	Ralph Yingling	School District
	Hal Gausman	Fairgrounds
	Annique Bennett	Chamber
	Ed Hurst	Property owner
October 16	Dave Whitfield	Downtown property owners
	Rose Whitfield	
	Tod Nelson	
	Rick Hansen	
October 17	Tom DeDenato	Commercial realtor
	Dave Remlinger	Developer
	Paul Popelka	Planning director
	Brad Feilberg	Public works director

The interviews consisted of one-on-one meetings, revolving around a variable set of investigative questions. The interviews also involved sketch mapping, helping to illustrate in a spatial context the issues, hopes and concerns discussed during the interviews. Overlaying these sketch maps revealed shared ideas about the city, adding emphasis to written notes and opportunities or urgency of action in certain areas.

Table C.01 identifies those interviewed, dates of interviews and the agencies represented where applicable.

Issues

Interviews were held in confidence. The following list of issues is intended to represent and report on overall findings, identifying topics that appeared especially insightful, important or that were shared by at least two interviewees.

Impact of the Prison

The Monroe Correctional Facility is located in the extreme southwestern portion of town, adjacent to Monroe High School. Stakeholders were familiar with the facility and its operations and

generally saw it as a good partner in City affairs and a valuable source of local employment. There were some concerns, however, about the prison's image and its impact on the value of properties nearby. New residential projects have proven difficult to sell within the visual orbit of the prison, and there is little hope among stakeholders that significant residential reinvestment is likely to occur there.

Importance of Downtown

Virtually all stakeholders mentioned the importance of the downtown area, both as a viable commercial district and as a key component of the community's identity. Many also noted that the downtown is immediately adjacent to Woods Creek and the Skykomish River, putting it in an advantageous position for recreation-oriented reinvestment. Parking, traffic and business owner collaboration are seen as barriers to prosperity, but interviewees believed those can be overcome.

US 2 Traffic

US 2 is busy. It is a particularly busy stretch of road during peak hour commutes and on Sunday evenings with west-bound US 2 drivers returning from weekends in central and eastern Washington. Winter travel is especially heavy. Skiers returning from Stevens Pass travel through Monroe on their way home to the Seattle metro area or to Everett. It is a roadway designed to accommodate through-traffic, with multiple lanes, a dedicated center turn lane, long traffic signal cycles, and a restricted number of driveways and intersections. Even during those times when the roadway is not congested, its width, intersection configurations, limited access and signal timing makes it a barrier between areas north and areas south, both for pedestrians and motorists.

US 2 Realignment

Interviewees confirmed the highway's realignment has been on the books for decades, and the State has acquired rights of way to accommodate it. But it is an expensive project, with no construction date programmed or forecast. Interviewees reported the project is proposed to proceed in three phases. The first phase will extend SR 522 northward into the foothills, constructing a new intersection with

191st Avenue SE north of the North Kelsey area. The second phase will extend eastward from that intersection to the existing US 2, providing a continuous link between SR 522 and US 2. The third phase will complete the westerly segment, joining US 2 just beyond Monroe's western city limits. Each of these phases promises significant consequences to Monroe, particularly as the commercial district that has grown up along the existing US 2 is gradually bypassed by regional traffic.

SR 522 Improvements

The State is now widening SR 522 to four lanes, facilitating travel between Monroe and I 405 near Woodinville. Interviewees reported that the project, when complete, promises to reduce travel time to the Seattle metro area. Stakeholders believe this will increase Monroe's attractiveness as a suburban bedroom community for commuters, as a business location destination for those operations looking for proximity to Seattle at a lower price, and as an accessible "jumping-off" point for recreation opportunities in

Monroe and in the forests to the east. The project does not include new Monroe off-ramps, however, doing little to increase regional access to the land just south of the existing city limits.

SR 203 Alignment

Some stakeholders mentioned that there might be an opportunity to alleviate downtown's traffic congestion by realigning SR 203 (Lewis Street) to the east, intersecting with the new US 2 alignment east of town. The intersection

of Lewis Street and Main Street is irregular, and the railroad crossing at Lewis Street exacerbates congestion during peak hours. In the eyes of these stakeholders, a realigned SR 203 – particularly if done in conjunction with the US 2 improvements – would help streamline northbound flow through town and, ultimately, contribute to downtown's revitalization.

River Opportunities

Almost all stakeholders identified the Skykomish River and Woods Creek as underutilized community assets. The river and creek figured prominently in conversations about downtown's revitalization, as well as those about the community's overall vision and economic

destiny. The watercourses provide immediate access to recreation and beauty, two things stakeholders believe Monroe should capitalize on. The reclamation of the Cadman site adds to the impression of opportunity, providing a vehicle to expand the community's waterfront presence and tie the developed part of Monroe intimately to a

wild and open waterfront. Those stakeholders who grew up in Monroe remember when access to the river was an important component of their childhood, and they'd like to see it that way again for today's youth.

Western Gateway

Interviewees believe the community's western gateway holds promise for development, as well as for the projection of community identity. Snohomish County's designated urban growth

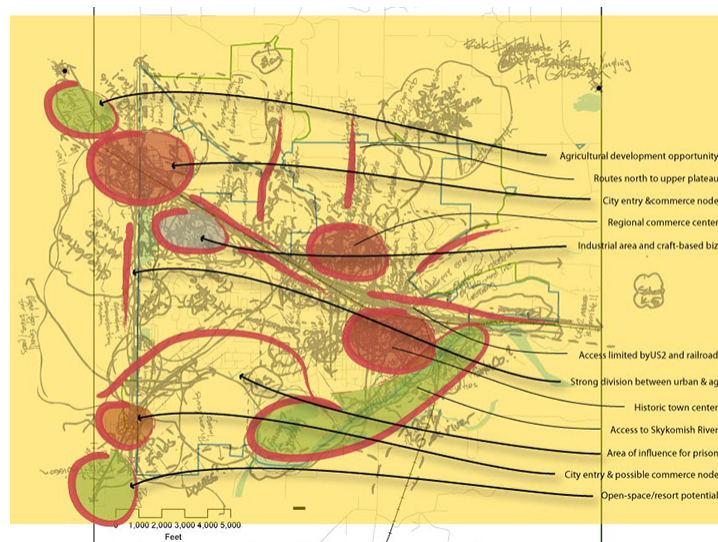


Figure C.02 – Three full days of stakeholder interviews provided an initial take on the issues downtown faces. Most interviews included a map for reference, with sketches made to articulate the discussion. This composite image reflects all of those, with summary notes made atop the stack. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)



Figure C.03 – Stakeholders and community participants alike felt the Skykomish and Woods Creek are underutilized community assets. These also figured prominently in conversations about downtown’s revitalization, as well as those about the community’s overall vision and economic future. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

area coincides with Monroe’s city limits, and the County’s long-range plans call for rural and agricultural use of vast areas west of town. This positions the western gateway as an abrupt transition from wide open spaces to urban landscape, and the community appears eager to take full advantage of that distinct edge. Existing development at the signalized Fryelands Boulevard/US 2 intersection establishes an urban presence, with a multi-tenant retail/office project at the southwestern corner and an expansive industrial park to the southeast. According to some interviewees, a proposed agro-tourism project just to the west of the intersection will help announce the entry to Monroe, saluting the relationship between the rural landscape and the community’s more urban context. This gateway will welcome travelers from the west and north, and the community wants it to be memorable and effective at a number of levels.

Southern Gateway

Travelers to Monroe approaching from Seattle, Bellevue and other metro communities will likely arrive on SR 522. As with the western gateway, the areas outside of the existing city limits are mostly open spaces, providing a distinct transition between rural and urban landscapes. But this area is more densely wooded, adjacent to the Skykomish River, with a gently winding approach into town. It also presents interesting opportunities, both in terms of establishing a prominent visual entry into Monroe and in terms of creating a recreational/tourist destination featuring the river and wooded hillsides. Interviewees mentioned the need to capture the potential of this southern gateway, using it as an economic boost for the community while still being mindful of protecting the character and charm that define Monroe.

Northward Growth

Stakeholders believe that if Monroe’s population is going to increase, it will grow to the north. Land south of town is unattractive to residential development and infill because of the prison. New residential development may occur in downtown, but the stakeholders believe that Monroe’s market for housing will be for those looking for single-family options not available elsewhere in the metro areas south and west. The proposed improvements to US 2 add strength to this argument, with increased access to Monroe’s foothills and facilitated crossing of the existing US 2 corridor.

Traffic Distribution

Monroe’s cross-town traffic flows are constrained by US 2, SR 522 and the railroad. The community is effectively divided into four segments, each divided from the other by these major transportation corridors.

Railroad Constraints

The BNRR main line runs east-west through Monroe, connecting the I-5 corridor communities to eastern Washington via Stevens Pass. Train operations feature both freight and passenger service, with multiple trains per day on the Monroe segment. There are no rail spurs in Monroe, and there is no passenger depot, meaning that the rail now brings no direct economic benefit to the community. There is only

one grade-separated rail crossing, at SR 522. All of the other crossings, five of them, are at-grade and controlled by lights, audible warnings and gates. The grade-separated crossing is a limited access highway, with the only available access point to the south of the tracks located one mile away at the SR 522 ramps at Main Street. Stakeholders recognize the constraints the railroad imposes on the community, and they would like to see better grade-separated crossing options in the future.

Fairgrounds

The Evergreen State Fairgrounds are located on the north side of US 2 near the city's western limits. Consisting of more than 150 acres, the fairgrounds hosts events year round. The racetrack and equestrian areas attract auto and horse riding enthusiasts from across the region, and the fairgrounds frequently reaches capacity during their events. Snohomish County owns and operates the fairgrounds, and they are in the process of updating the facility's master plan. Some of the elements of that plan include providing for increased indoor facility capacity, as well as a new look at equestrian and auto racing facilities to improve service quality and expand capacity.

Industrial Park

Monroe's industrial park, just south of the fairgrounds and encompassing more than 150 acres, is a major employment district within the city. It hosts a range of manufacturing, wholesale, logistics and retail activities. Businesses in the industrial park include manufacturers of aircraft parts, automobile machine shops, and wineries, reflecting the region's ties to the aircraft industry, proximity to the fairgrounds and its racing pedigree, and close connections to the rural landscape and blossoming value-added processing.

The industrial park is more than 30 years old, and it has proven its ability to adapt to changing conditions. Stakeholders indicated that the park will continue to play an important role in Monroe's economy, particularly as the community leans into the world of economic innovation, facilitated access to the Seattle metro area, and the encouragement of locally-based, craft-based industry.



Figure C.04 – The Evergreen State Fairgrounds came up often as another feature with unrealized potential - benefitting Monroe, but also Snohomish County. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

North Kelsey Traffic

According to those interviewed, the North Kelsey area was intended to become a mixed-use professional office campus, designed to host the likes of Microsoft, Intel or Amazon. That vision has faded, with North Kelsey evolving into a more conventional large-format retail district. Lowe's and Fred Meyer are already there, and a Wal Mart is on the horizon. This commercial district lies just to the north of US 2, using North Kelsey Drive and Chain Lake Road to access that major corridor. Stakeholders are concerned that the traffic from the new Wal Mart and the other big-box retailers will exacerbate problems on US 2, making a bad problem even worse. While many may appreciate the boost in retail activity that Wal Mart and its brothers may bring, many others are concerned that the increased traffic will exceed roadway and rail crossing capacity to accommodate it.



Figure C.05 – Participants supported the evolution of Main Street into a more walkable, mixed-use corridor - echoing policy established in the previous comprehensive plan. Features like the Wagner Arts Center, higher-density housing and new services and professional offices are part of that transition - adding value and energy to neighborhoods adjoining the route. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

Main Street Corridor

Main Street runs from SR 522 on the southwest to US 2 on the northeast, connecting downtown Monroe to both highway corridors. Stakeholders identified at least three distinct character areas along the course of Main Street, each with its own opportunities and challenges. These stakeholders believe Main Street holds a key to Monroe's revitalization - particularly with respect to the downtown - but they have difficulty articulating how the street, its traffic and the land developed alongside it can best be managed.

According to the interviewees, the furthest west Main Street segment runs from SR 522 to just west of City Hall. It serves the high school, prison, middle school and city yard. It also provides access to much of Monroe's central residential district. The roadway serves mostly through-traffic, with autos and trucks making

their way from SR 522 to various institutional uses along the corridor and to downtown.

The middle segment runs from City Hall to just west of Lewis Street, featuring a mix of former homes converted to office uses and a variety of other businesses. It was originally developed for residential use, providing convenient access to downtown. As Main Street became more busy and got widened, residential uses gave way to businesses.

The easternmost segment of Main Street serves downtown, running at an angle to the prevailing street grid and intersecting with US 2 and the BNRR railroad near Woods Creek.

Priorities

Based on these interviews, it appears that several community priorities elevate in importance.

Keep Downtown Healthy

Downtown represents Monroe's ties to its past and projects its community image. Stakeholders believe that any economic development strategy or plan for reinvestment take downtown Monroe into account. This part of town hosts its historic commercial core, has an effective street grid, lies adjacent to Woods Creek and the Skykomish River and is a natural focus for the type of character-driven growth Monroe seeks. Keeping the downtown healthy is a primary directive.

Improve Connectivity to Downtown

Part of improving downtown's condition and using it as an engine for future economic prosperity is also improving its access from other parts of the community. Stakeholders want downtown to be a part of Monroe residents' every day lives. Making it easier to get there - by car, on foot or on a bike - is critical to reestablishing downtown's connections to the community.

Improve Railroad Crossings

Public safety alone is enough of a reason to improve the community's railroad crossings. SR 522 provides the only grade-separated crossing, and, with multiple trains per day, the BNRR track significantly disrupts traffic flows. And rail traffic is forecast to increase. The community needs better, safer and more accessible rail crossings.

Enhance Neighborhood Nodes

Interviewees believe Monroe is large enough to support multiple centers of activity. Downtown Monroe is one, nestled south of US 2 and along the waterfront. Frylelands is another, with a budding commercial and recreational complex emerging at the community's western edge. Depending what happens with forecast growth patterns, it might be possible to support additional neighborhood-scale centers near the Main Street/SR 522 intersection or in the foothills. These centers would serve the immediate residential areas around them, and they'd provide for some interesting synergy and dimension to the overall townscape.

Manage Congestion

Traffic makes traveling through Monroe inconvenient at times. It is on the minds of the stakeholders interviewed, and it figures prominently in the community's previous planning efforts. It's an issue at peak travel times and on Sunday afternoons and evenings. US 2 is a thoroughfare, dictating the function and performance of all of the community's other streets. New commercial development will make the problem worse in the eyes of stakeholders, and this plan must identify strategies to manage - or accept - Monroe's traffic congestion situation.

Reconnect to the River

"The Adventure Starts Here" is a slogan the City adopted, and it's one the community has embraced. The Skykomish River is a first priority move in that direction, and stakeholders agreed that every opportunity should be taken to increase public access to the waterfront. There was similar support for activity-based recreation in town (like for the cable wakeboard park), increased trail connections, and access to the rivers, forests and hillsides just east of town.

Maintain the Rural Edge

Part of Monroe's identity lies in its placement as the last real city, located at the outside edge of the Puget Sound metro area and at the foothills of the Cascades. The vast open spaces surrounding Monroe on all sides are key to that image, and, according to these stakeholders, the City should reinforce the County's moves to preserve that agricultural and rural landscape.

Keep Our Youth Active

Many of the stakeholders believe Monroe offers great opportunities for an active childhood, featuring direct and easy access to the outdoors. An effective parks and recreation program, abundant trails, and an overall community appreciation for activity and wellness are things this process should strive to provide.

Activity Capsules

The engagement process sought to integrate the multiple planning projects into a single effort, designing special focus "capsules" to address vision, economic development, transportation, parks and recreation, and land use. Each capsule featured concentrated study on dedicated topics, with a public workshop to discuss and cement resolution to a variety of topic-specific issues.

Capsule 1 - Vision

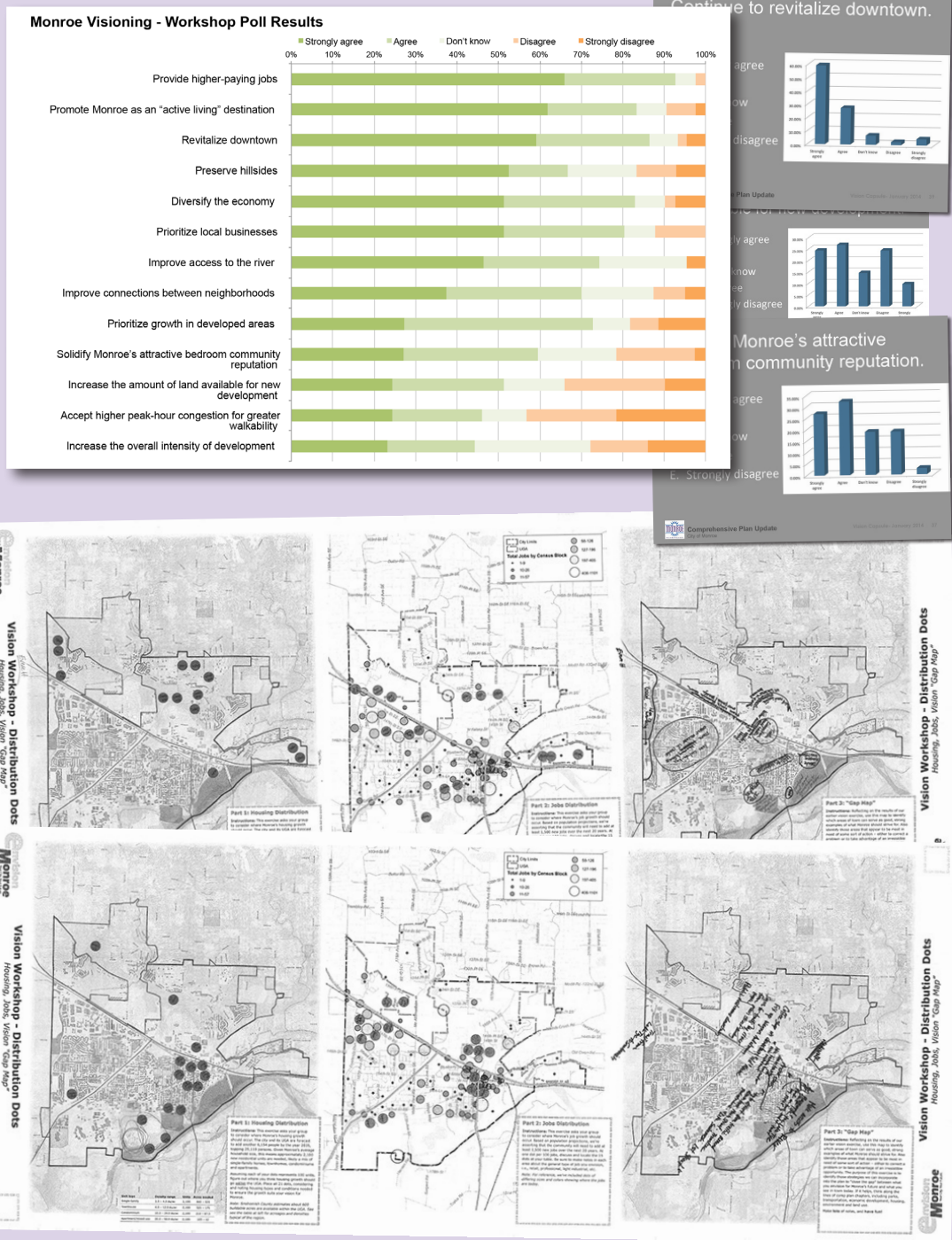
The first activity capsule concentrated on vision, featuring a public workshop (January 23, 2014, Park Place Middle School) on where the community should accommodate forecast population growth and new jobs and how they can best be managed. Workshop participants, including members of the City Council, Planning Commission, Parks Board, citizen advisory committee, and the general public, heard a presentation about demographics, forecasts and community characteristics. They then worked in small groups to arrange housing and jobs on a map of Monroe.

Groups also identified places in Monroe where housing and employment developments could serve as a model to guide future decisions. They then presented their findings to the rest of the room.

Results from this workshop shaped the initial working vision and served as a springboard for the strategy-based conversations in the second activity capsule.

Capsule 2 - Economic Development

This second activity, conducted on February 26, 2014 at Park Place Middle School, focused on economic development strategy. It interpreted



the results of the first workshop activity and resulted in a set of economic development priorities, priorities that now underpin the plan's economic development element.

Participants considered economic trends and forecasts, Monroe's existing economic environment, its population characteristics, and its potential for growth in various economic sectors. Again, in small groups, workshop participants explored alternative strategic approaches to capitalize on economic opportunity - while still retaining those characteristics that make Monroe unique and an attractive place to live, work and shop.

Based on the conversations and subsequent presentations, the results proposed an economic development strategy that achieves the following six objectives:

- *A thriving downtown with vibrant "main street character"*
- *A great place to start and run a business*
- *An outdoor and adventure destination*
- *Growing smart – Monroe style*
- *A complete regional retail center*
- *A walkable, accessible, and*
- *An interconnected community.*

Capsule 3 - Transportation

The Chamber of Commerce's downstairs conference room was the site of the third activity capsule on March 27, 2014. The workshop followed a field tour conducted a day earlier, where members of the Planning Commission and citizens advisory committee members examined in person the variety of issues the community's transportation planning will need to address.

Workshop activities focused on transportation issues, exploring the tension between regional and local transportation needs. In the workshop, participants learned about the various forces influencing Monroe's transportation system and the actions the community can take to manage them.

Participants studied transportation system maps and considered strategies for managing vehicular, freight and non-motorized transportation modes in ways to achieve the vision (from Capsule 1) and work toward the community's economic development objectives (from Capsule 2).

Results from this workshop emphasized the community's needs to maintain through-movement on US Highway 2, to increase local access between neighborhoods, to increase safety for children walking to and from school, to address parking issues downtown, and to encourage local employment development, reducing commute distances for Monroe residents. Participants also supported the continuing widening of SR 522 to enhance connections to regional centers in the Seattle metro area. FirstAir Field was not a prominent part of the transportation conversation, but participants did concentrate on increased rail traffic and the need to address north-south connectivity.

These recommendations translate directly to the plan's policy on transportation, and also to that for land use, economic development and parks and recreation.

Capsule 4 - Parks, Recreation & Open Space

This process included a full update to the City's parks, recreation and open space plan, and the activity centered on this topic covered a range of strategic, acquisition, development and rehabilitation issues. Participants attended a May 1 workshop at the Park Place Middle School and considered how best to integrate parks planning into the community's economic development, transportation, natural resource conservation, and recreation environments.

Results from this workshop underpin Monroe's new parks plan, identifying specific capital investments and program improvements. They also underpin the parks, recreation and open space element, increasing the park system's prominence in the community's economic development strategy and emphasizing opportunities to connect to the Skykomish River greenway and improve all-weather athletic facilities.

Capsule 5 - Land Use

Monroe ran a week-long "storefront studio" from June 1 through June 7, 2014, hosting the community for two evening workshops and providing open-door hours for daytime visitors.

Members of the public were able to speak directly with the consultant team and influence the downtown planning process, reviewing planning materials and discussing potential planning strategies. Studio results shaped recommendations in the plan and informed the final community workshop, and members of the Planning Commission and citizens advisory committee volunteered time to staff the center, too.

Conversations and workshops during the studio helped generate a preferred spatial strategy and indicated what types of actions should ascend to higher priority. The preferred spatial strategy emerged from community discussions about four spatial alternatives:

"Three-in-One Monroe"

This alternative imagines Monroe developing as a city with three main character areas: A "regional district," developed for and servicing activities that draw from the entire Sky Valley, a "local" or "small-town" district, configured to support walkability and a strong sense of community, and the "north hill district," developing as a residential-only area. This alternative acknowledges and optimizes patterns already in place, capitalizing on existing character features and infrastructure. Features of each area in Three-in-one Monroe include:

Regional District

- *Land Use – Commercial and jobs-oriented land uses predominate the regional district. Development patterns facilitate motorized*

access, use and movement. Development patterns anticipate the proposed bypass north of Highway 2. The Fairgrounds and airport help set the stage, with surrounding land uses supporting additional, related employment centers. Land uses in the Frylands would remain largely as-is, though the area would be expected to grow in prominence as the city's jobs center and "front door" to many regional visitors, perhaps including a hotel and convention center near Lake Tye.

- *Transportation – Secondary routes running parallel and perpendicular to US 2 would be developed, facilitating movement and reducing reliance on the existing highway. New transportation infrastructure would be designed in anticipation of the proposed bypass. Emphasis would be placed on the interchanges serving Monroe, working to improve vehicular access to the district. One additional grade-separated crossing of the rail line would be sought near the Frylands Boulevard/US2 intersection, improving freight movement and tourist flow to and from the district. Vehicular flow between SR 522 and the Frylands business park/Lake Tye would be another focus, as would improved pedestrian crossing conditions at Frylands/US2.*
- *Economic Development – The regional district's features and characteristics would be promoted, boosting small to mid-scale business growth and retail activity along the US 2 corridor, making Monroe more fiscally sustainable. Initiatives like the Innovation Partnership Zone would help promote business growth compatible with Monroe's*



unique features and assets. The fairgrounds and the airport's role in regional district activities would be optimized, perhaps hosting additional tourism, conference or business park activities. Overall, Monroe's regional district would become a predominant and proud "face" to the City's identity, with enhanced gateways and an enhanced street treatment of the existing US 2 –something made more feasible with construction of the new highway bypass.

- **Parks** – Over time, the regional district would appear more welcoming and beautiful through landscaping along the highway and arterials, but few additional parks would be created here. Lake Tye's heightened role as a regional sports and recreation center would require additional investment, with increasing use of the soccer complex to the west, possible realization of the Snohomish County Fairfield Park, and increased emphasis on the regional and super-regional attraction of the fairgrounds.
- **Utilities** – This alternative would result in no need for utilities expansion, but would likely drive increased demand for water and sewer service within the regional district. It might also motivate demand for improved water and wastewater services north of the proposed US 2 bypass. Because construction of the bypass is anticipated in this alternative, utility crossings and improvements would need to be in place prior to highway development.

Local "Small Town" District

- **Land Use** – A mix of housing types would typify the local district, with a gradual

trend of infill development and increasing intensity. The existing central business district (CBD) and neighborhood commercial nodes would likely see increased housing density. Development patterns would be intentionally smaller-scale in this area, fostering the "small town" look and feel many residents crave. Though locals would likely shop and/or work in the regional district, the land-use mix and smaller scale of the local district would mean residents wouldn't have to do so, at least for day-to-day needs.

- **Transportation** – Infill development and improved connectivity within and between neighborhoods would foster an environment far more walkable than exists today. Improvements to link neighborhoods east and west of SR 522 would become a priority, helping heal that divide and making access between the Frylands area and the local/ small town district far easier.
- **Economic Development** – The bulk of Monroe's small town charm would be captured in the local district, and for many, such an environment - in context of the river and regional district attractions – would be an irresistible draw. Employment growth in the regional district and in a revived CBD would boost the ability for many to work and live within City limits.
- **Parks** – The local district would feature numerous neighborhood-scale parks and plazas, placing such a feature within easy walking distance of everyone. The proposed "Village Park" park in the CBD would become a priority. The Skykomish River would remain an important asset, but would likely not grow in



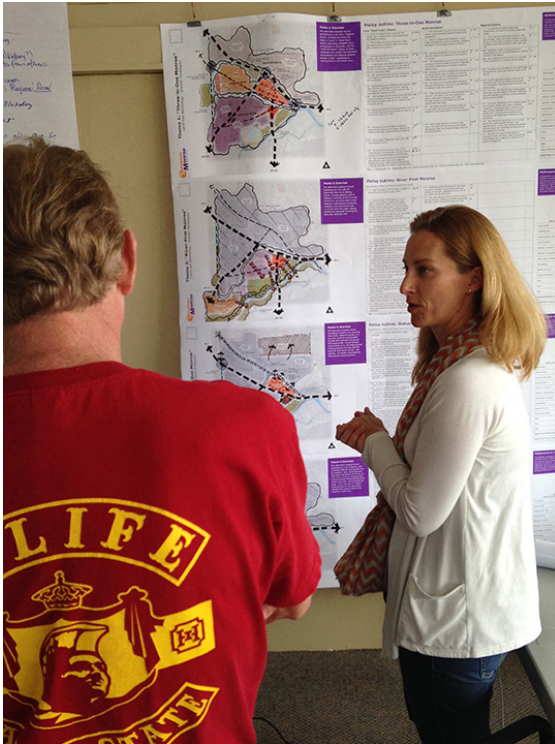


Figure C.07 – The land use “capsule” asked residents to evaluate the trade-offs associated with four differing land use strategies. A hybrid between the “Three in One” and “River First” approaches received the strongest support.. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

terms of overall prominence among City park features. Improved east-west connectivity and improved crossing conditions at Fryelands and SR 2 would help improve access to Lake Tye for residents living in the local district.

- **Utilities** – The local/small-town district would require little additional utility investment, except as necessary to support higher levels of development in the CBD and other local district mixed-use nodes.

North Hill District

- **Land Use** – This area’s land use pattern would continue present trends, consisting mostly of single-family development. Efforts to preserve the hillsides as a visual buffer and greenbelt would be supported, managing the design of the proposed bypass accordingly. Residents of the North Hill area would rely on vehicular access to the regional and local districts for services.
- **Transportation** – The transportation network in this district will continue to be auto

oriented, but with an integrated trail system where space and property ownership patterns allow. Emphasis will be on increasing the connectivity of existing arterial streets to access US 2 and the rest of Monroe, with flow concentrated among the three existing routes down from the hill.

- **Economic Development** – This area would contribute little to the area’s economic development, other than as an alternative to traditional small town patterns. The North Hill district might also house some who own or manage regional district businesses.
- **Parks** – Small neighborhood parks would become more common in this district, with new development setting aside space to manage storm water drainage, conserve critical habitat and provide neighborhood open space. The hillside greenbelt would exist largely as a visual buffer, but could include localized trails adjacent to and under sections of the future bypass.
- **Utilities** – Storm water treatment would be a main issue in the North Hill area, ensuring that upland development does not increase drainage impact on downhill properties.

“River First Monroe”

This alternative imagines Monroe developing as a city with the Skykomish River as its defining feature. Existing patterns north of Highway 2 and west of SR 522 would be left as-is, but areas south of both highways would change dramatically, creating a more diverse and inter-connected zone with higher intensity development generally bordering the flood plain along the river. Characteristics of “River First” Monroe would include:

- **Land Use** – Uses in all areas north and west of Highway 2 and SR 522 would remain largely intact, allowing the Fryelands and the Highway 2 corridor to continue to serve as they do today. But south and east of the highways (excluding the Correctional Complex), work to create a more diverse, connected and higher-intensity community “heart” would commence. Changes would include developing a major mixed-use node along Main and east of 203, connecting a revived downtown to a greatly-improved Al Borlin Park. Higher-intensity housing would also be encouraged near (but not within) the river floodplain, potentially at a second “node” along Main,

overlooking new parklands and trails near City Hall and near where Park Place Middle School exists today. This alternative may also lead to the City's southern expansion, increasing the amount of river frontage within city limits and providing opportunities for increased recreational, event, and tourist access to the river.

- **Transportation** – With exception of improved connectivity south and east of highways 2 and 522, transportation systems could remain largely as-is. Alternately, the type of transportation changes envisioned in Alternative 1's Regional District could apply. Improvements to the downtown grid network, including activation of Fremont Street at Madison and Main would accommodate additional development by helping balance traffic flow through downtown while creating a very walkable, bikeable city center.

- **Economic Development** – Monroe's outdoorsy, "Adventure Starts Here" strategies would play a central role in the River First Monroe alternative. Through improvements described in the land use and parks subheadings, the City could establish and solidify its reputation as a community with tremendous access to open space and parkland resources. Job growth, likely centered in the Frylands area, would focus on light industries related to recreational needs. New residents might typically be young families seeking a more walkable, tightly-knit community with great access to parks and river shorelines, or older, empty-nest retirees looking for similar conditions adjacent to both parklands and an active downtown.

- **Parks** – This alternative envisions a community far more connected to the river and shoreline areas than it is today. Central to this, the type of mixed-use node described in Monroe's downtown plan would be realized, creating an active, housing-rich center adjacent and connecting to Al Borlin Park. The park itself would be the focus of a master planning process, designing improvements and features that would open the park up to views, greater activity and ties to a regional trail system. This alternative would also work to connect Borlin Park more fully and functionally to Centennial Park and future open space lands vacated by Cadman Pit operations.

Additional master planning would take place to envision and begin work to extend greenbelt holdings downstream, potentially as far as the SR 522 bridge over the Skykomish. Park areas along and south of Lake Tye would also be enhanced, creating a greenbelt border along the City's western limits as far south as SH 522.

- **Utilities** – The City's water and wastewater

systems would need to be evaluated for their ability to serve land along the river to the City's south, potentially requiring additional distribution lines, collection lines, and lift stations. Utilities in other parts of the community would remain essentially unchanged, with public investment directed to enhance river access and to establish development patterns consistent with that.

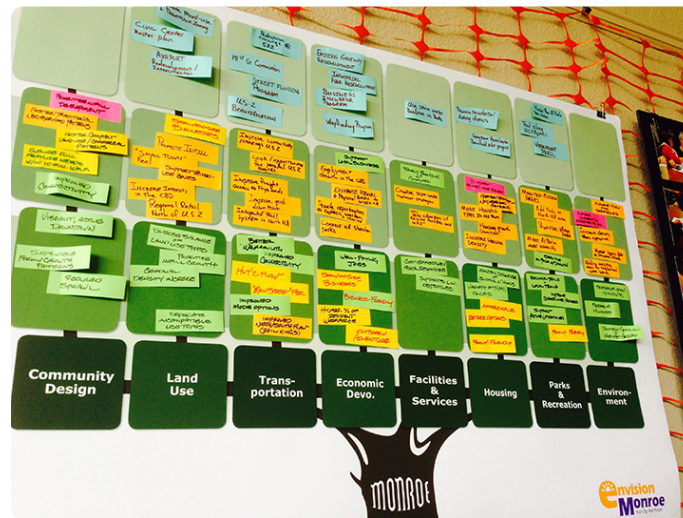


Figure C.08 – To help illustrate the plan's layout and the various goals, policies and action items supported during the process, a "vision tree" was created, displayed and amended as the process moved forward. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

"Status Quo Monroe"

This alternative imagines Monroe developing in patterns very much like those today. Additional growth, as it occurred, would be accommodated through UGA expansion and general infill

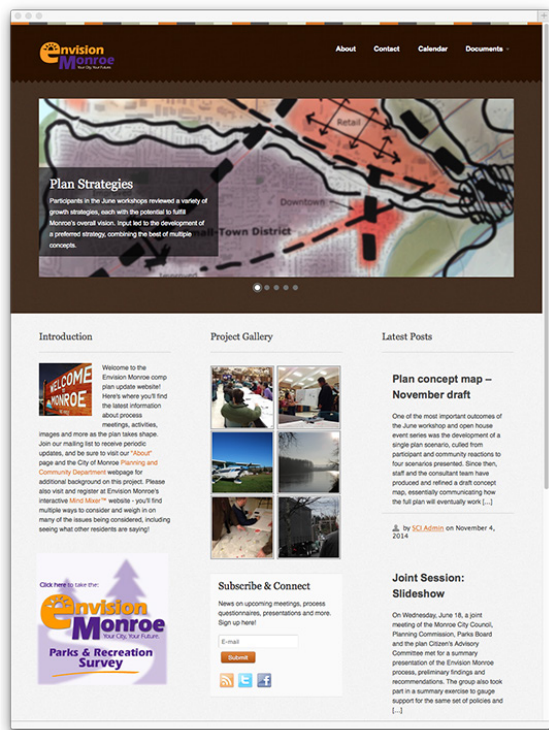


Figure C.09 – The update process included two websites - a standard, schedule and document-oriented site and another, more interactive site hosted by MindMixer™. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

opportunities. Overall densities would remain as-is, with higher-density housing perhaps occurring with infill along the Main Street corridor - and perhaps - on hillsides overlooking the Kelsey Street shopping district. Characteristics of “Status Quo Monroe” would include:

- *Land Use* – Land use in all areas would remain largely unchanged. Work to revitalize downtown would continue, perhaps leveraging mixed-use development along Main and in the CBD to do so. But apart from existing commercial and industrial areas, single-family residential would predominate, with mid-density neighborhoods like those near Frylands typical south of Highway 2 and low-density neighborhoods like those in North Monroe everywhere else. This pattern may result in expansion pressure further north and further to the southwest, accessing land for development that is relatively unconstrained by floodplain and sensitive habitat.
- *Transportation* – As with the “Three in One Monroe” alternative north of Highway

2, secondary routes running parallel and perpendicular to the highway would be encouraged, facilitating movement and reducing reliance on US 2. No additional above or below-grade crossings of the rail line would be developed, but improved pedestrian crossing conditions at Frylands Boulevard/US 2 and access from SR 522 would be sought to facilitate visitation and freight traffic in the Frylands industrial/business park district. This alternative wrestles with having to plan for two US 2 options, ensuring that the existing active US 2 continues to function and preserving the vacant right of way for future highway development. This scenario would likely seek to get interim value out of the existing right of way, however, constructing a segment of the Centennial Trail along the corridor until the bypass is built.

- *Economic Development* – Monroe’s “Adventure Starts Here” strategy would play a secondary role, yielding to a narrative framing Monroe as one of the last places in Snohomish County offering quality schools and affordable, single-family housing. New residents might typically be young families seeking a place to raise children in a larger, detached home with access to neighborhood parks and large retailers. Commuting is the predominant pattern, with local entrepreneurs filling local business parks, industrial spaces, and offices over time.
- *Parks* – This alternative envisions little policy-related change regarding parks and open space. As long-term objectives, regional trails and shoreline improvements would still be advanced, but needs more directly associated with single-family neighborhoods, i.e., local parks, playgrounds and ballfields, would generally come first. Lake Tye’s emerging identity as a venue for regional sports and “adventure” oriented activities would likely persist, driving some degree of improvement.
- *Utilities* – System expansion may be necessary, particularly in terms of wastewater and storm drainage, to accommodate potential expansion of urban development to the north and to the southwest. Otherwise, system demand would be consistent with existing plans.

“Village Hub Monroe”

This alternative imagines Monroe developing as a set of districts, each somewhat different

and separate from its neighbors. Here, existing barriers that tend to divide the community are seen less as issues to overcome than natural divisions among differing areas. At the same time - and somewhat like today - each sub-area (or "village" per this title) would develop its own centerpiece, situated and uniquely suited to the character of each village. Characteristics of "Village Hub Monroe" would include:

- *Land Use* – Uses in all areas would remain largely as-is, with the exception of somewhat higher-intensity mixed-use areas being established to foster the development of each village hub. For example, the existing Lake Tye/Frylands area would likely follow its existing course, but intensify in a way that more firmly establishes a centralized, walk-to "hub" along Frylands Boulevard.

Another such hub might evolve along the western end of Main Street, serving neighborhoods surrounding the Main Street/SR 522 interchange. Of course, the existing CBD would develop as the city's primary "village hub," though in this alternative, it would play a more localized role than traditionally intended. This pattern would result in an overall increase in residential density within an easy walk of the new hubs, emphasizing the importance of the retail/office districts to the neighborhoods surrounding them.

- *Transportation* – The transportation network would emphasize convenient, non-vehicular access to village hubs, allowing easy neighborhood access to areas of more intense development. These access routes need not

be roads - a helpful strategy where roadway right of way would be too difficult to obtain or to fit in areas already developed. The overall roadway network would still accommodate cars, of course, but would emphasize "inter-hub" connections to facilitate travel between areas of intensity.

- *Economic Development* – Each village hub would express a unique identity and, ideally, would establish a cooperative economic relationship with other hubs. For the most part, development in these hubs would focus

on provision of neighborhood-scale services and professional offices. Restaurants, cafes, specialty retail and small-scale grocery stores would be the norm, each supported by neighborhoods within one-half mile. Success would rely on increased residential density near the center of each hub and a relatively modest scale of retail and office development. Except for the

professional office component, these hubs would not be relied upon as a source of substantial job creation or enhancement. Many residents would live and work within walking distance of each destination, usually within a single district.

- *Parks* - This alternative envisions little change related to parks and open space. Long-term objectives, regional trails and shoreline improvements would still be advanced, but needs more directly associated with village neighborhoods and hubs, i.e., plazas, local parks, playgrounds and ballfields - and local trails to access the hubs - would generally come first.

In the second community workshop, participants considered a preferred alternative and suggested "first move" implementation actions.



Figure C.10 – The lack of connectivity between neighborhoods east and west of SR 522 was brought up during the land use capsule, with the possibility of a non-motorized pathway like the one sketched here being developed. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

The preferred alternative, known as “Maximizing Monroe”, was derived from the previous four, incorporating components from each to varying degrees. The bulk of the direction in this preferred alternative was consistent with the “Three-in-One” alternative, with increased emphasis on access to the Skykomsh, development of convenient neighborhood centers, and a reining in of urban expansion, concentrating investment in the current urban growth area. Increased coordination between the City and County was also a key recommendation, particularly in the arena of economic development and community design related to impacts and opportunities the fairgrounds present.

“Maximizing Monroe” was the basis of the June joint Planning Commission, Parks Board, City Council and citizen advisory committee meeting.

Online Tools / Social Media

Monroe developed a project web site, and the City elected to include a stand-alone, dedicated community page to encourage public dialogue on the plan. Both of which were used aggressively at the outset of the process, providing access to planning materials and schedules and inviting conversations on planning topics in sync with the activity capsules.

Project Website

The project website - run parallel to the City’s web presence - alerted the public to the plan’s progress, inviting participation and making available workshop materials and results. The site also provided a project calendar, displaying the range of public events and project meetings.

Mind/Mixer

The City engaged Mind/Mixer™ to provide a platform for online community involvement in the planning process, allowing remote participation on pace with the topics the process addressed. For example, online participants offered visual examples of model housing and employment strategies in response to prompts related to

Capsule 1’s focus on vision. Online results populated the “process wall” used throughout, presenting a visual accounting of online input to inform public meetings and events.

Joint Workshops

Monroe convened two joint workshops, reviewing the preferred alternative in one and then reviewing the draft policy framework at the second. The first workshop, held June 18, 2014 at Park Place Middle School, presented “Maximizing Monroe” and the spatial strategy underlying it. Representatives from the City Council, Planning Commission, Parks Board and citizens advisory committee reviewed the strategy and its implications, making specific recommendations to fine-tune it for use as the basis for the comprehensive plan, transportation plan, parks, recreation and open space plan, economic development strategy, and capital facilities plan.

The second joint workshop, held in Fire District #3’s training room on January 27, 2015, focused on the concepts and details of the proposed policy framework, the skeleton around which the plans would be based. This meeting followed close work with staff to refine a future land use map in conformance with Maximizing Monroe and to determine the applicability of existing City policy in the context of the new direction. Members of the City Council, Planning Commission, Parks Board, and citizens advisory committee participated in that workshop, providing direct feedback on the goals and policies the comprehensive plan contains.

Planning Commission

The Monroe Planning Commission met multiple times on this project, basing its initial deliberations on the proposed policy framework immediately after the January 27 joint workshop.

The Planning Commission met weekly from February 9 through April 27, 2015 to review the plan. Their work began on the plan’s goals and policies, graduating ultimately to a review of the entire plan and making a recommendation to City Council in October 2015. The Planning

Commission held public hearings on April and May 2015.

Parks Board

The Parks Board met in March and April to review the proposed PROS plan and the comprehensive plan parks and recreation element.

City Council

The Monroe City Council was invited to participate throughout the process, and many took the opportunity to attend workshops, visit the storefront studio and participate in Mind/Mixer exercises.

The Council began its review of the comprehensive plan's goals and policies in parallel with the Planning Commission, devoting a portion of its weekly agendas to review, discuss and refine overall planning goals and to fine-tune policy direction. Council feedback also informed Planning Commission discussions at this point, ensuring the Commission's deliberations took into account Council positions on specific policy choices.

Council began review of the Planning Commission's recommendation in October 2015, made targeted revisions and adopted the Comprehensive Plan on December 8, 2015.

